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AUTHORITY

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

THE KINGPIN! DAREDEVIL! THE BLACK CAT! THE FALCON! ALL IN . . .

GANG WAR

PART FIVE
THE CONCLUSION

GEIGER+MCLEOD

"THE WAR ENDS!"

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

FINAL

DAILY BUGLE

THE PICTURE NEWSPAPER

30¢

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GANG WAR RAGES ON!

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THROUGHOUT THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, **WAR** HAS BEEN WAGED IN THE STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY. IT IS A WAR OF **GANGSTERS.**

THE WAR CAME AS THE RESULT OF A SUDDEN, MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF THE CITY'S MOST POWERFUL ORGANIZED CRIME LEADER... THE **KINGPIN.**

FINAL DAILY BUGLE THE PICTURE NEWSPAPER 30¢

KINGPIN IS MISSING

FINAL DAILY BUGLE THE PICTURE NEWSPAPER 30¢

SPIDER-MAN WANTED FOR MURDER

WITH THE KINGPIN GONE, THE CRIMINAL HIERARCHY BECAME VIOLENTLY UNSTABLE AS SEVERAL MAJOR FACTIONS BEGAN A DESPERATE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL. *

*GANG WAR PARTS 1-5 TAKE PLACE BEFORE SPIDER-MAN VS. WOLVERINE #1 AND AFTER THE DAREDEVIL GRAPHIC NOVEL. -- J.S.

FINAL DAILY BUGLE THE PICTURE NEWSPAPER 30¢

THE PUNISHER STRIKES

"HE'S LIKE A KID IN A CANDY STORE"

IN THE MIDST OF THE VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED, A LONE MAN STRUGGLES TO **CONTAIN** THE FIGHTING... TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT LIVES CAUGHT IN THE MYRIAD CROSSFIRES.

HIS NAME IS PETER PARKER. HE IS THE **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!**

AND, SECLUDED BEHIND GLASS WALLS IN A STEEL TOWER...

... THE KINGPIN OF CRIME.

NEXT.!

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, MR. FISK?

I HAVE MISGIVINGS ABOUT YOUR TREATMENT OF MY WIFE, DOCTOR ZACHAR.

YOU... LEFT INSTRUCTIONS TO KEEP HER SEDATED... RELAXED SO THAT NO ONE WOULD... COULD...

YOU FRIGHTENED MY WIFE, DOCTOR ZACHAR. HER MIND IS STILL THAT OF A YOUNG GIRL...

SHE RECOGNIZED MY SON WHEN HE CAME TO VISIT. * YOU TOLD HER SHE'D DONE WRONG. YOU THREATTENED TO INCREASE HER MEDICATION UNLESS SHE DID AS SHE WAS TOLD.

YOUR SON RICHARD... HE HAD BEGUN TO SUSPECT...

MY SON IS OF NO CONCERN TO YOU. MY WIFE WAS YOUR SOLE CHARGE.

YOU'VE FAILED ME MISERABLY, DOCTOR ZACHAR.

I... I'M SORRY... I...

* SEE ISSUE #286 FOR DETAILS -- JIM.

ZZAPP!

APOLOGY ACCEPTED.

NEXT!

CHELSEA... PETE'S PROBABLY ASLEEP! GOOD THING I STILL HAVE MY PASS KEY TO HIS APARTMENT.

I'VE BEEN REALLY RATTLED ABOUT HIS NEW "DEFENDER OF THE PEOPLE" BIT.

SOMETIMES I DON'T THINK *PETE* KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS! IN FACT, THE ONLY THING I'M *SURE* HE WANTS... IS WHAT *EVERY* MAN WANTS...

...BREAK-FAST IN BED!

AND, I'M--EH?

BLACK CAT? WHAT ARE *YOU...?*

OH-- YOU'RE *MOLLY JO*, RIGHT? WE MET THE OTHER DAY!

PETE'S ASLEEP.

MOLLY JO?!

SLAM

WHAT IS SHE DOING HERE!?

PETER... I'M TALKING TO YOU!!

YAWN

Y'KNOW, I GET THAT GENERAL IMPRESSION...

PHONE, PETER. SOMEBODY NAMED "AUNT MAY"...?

PETER? PETER, ARE YOU THERE?

OH GOSH OH GOSH OH GOSH!

MY APARTMENT BLEW UP!

I'LL GIVE YOU TAXI FARE TO A HOTEL.

WHAT, AUNT MAY? I-- NO, AUNT MAY. WE'RE UH... HAVING BREAKFAST!

BREAKFAST, DARLING?

NO, THANKS. IT'S PROBABLY CATNIP.

WHY, *SURE*, AUNT MAY... I'D *LOVE* TO COME OVER FOR LUNCH.

NICE HAIRCUT. YOU USE GARDENING SHEARS OR A SHARP ROCK?

I'LL BE RIGHT OVER, AUNT MAY!

SHEESH...

WHY, I OUGHTTA...!

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN*, I'M "FIRED"? I DID GOOD WORK FOR THE ARRANGER WHILE YOU WERE GONE!

I SAVED HIS *LIFE--!* I DON'T DESERVE THIS!

I AM AWARE OF YOUR RECORD, *JACK O'LANTERN!*

YOU HAVE, HOWEVER, SERVED YOUR PURPOSE. YOU'VE YET TO DEMONSTRATE TO MY SATISFACTION A LEVEL OF PROWESS CONSUMMATE TO THE *CHIEF ASSASSIN* POSITION WITHIN MY ORGANIZATION.

YOU'LL REGRET THIS.

I THINK NOT.

NEXT!

GREENWICH VILLAGE.

HE TRIED TO KILL ME! THAT MANIAC EX-PARTNER OF YOURS--

--THE HOBGOBLIN! RICHARD, THE MAN HAS SNAPPED! I'M GONNA POP A CAP IN HIS YELLOW, UGLY FACE!

RELAX, ALFREDO. YOU CAN'T JUST RUN AROUND SHOOTING PEOPLE.

SURE I CAN.

MY FATHER, THE KINGPIN, IS UP TO SOMETHING ALFREDO. THE HOBGOBLIN HAS PROBABLY SOLD US OUT BY NOW!

THAT MEANS WE'VE GOT REAL PROBLEMS.

HEY, PAL, I DON'T LET ANYBODY WALK OVER ME! MY DEAR, RICH DADDY TAUGHT ME THAT!

I'M GOING TO TAKE HOBGOBLIN OUT!

FINE! NOW I'M LOSING ALFREDO! THAT AND FATHER... AND NOW THIS BUSINESS WITH HOBGOBLIN--

-- I NEVER THOUGHT MY CHARADE AS THE ROSE WOULD BRING SO MUCH PAIN TO SO MANY PEOPLE...

...OR BRING ME TO THE POINT WHERE I HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT I SHOULD EVEN GO ON!

CANAL STREET. NOON.

THE FAT BOY'S BEIN' REAL QUIET.

MAKES ME NERVOUS WHEN KINGPIN'S THIS QUIET. IT USUALLY MEANS HE'S MAKING SOME HEAVY MOVES!

OH--I'M SORRY!

RELAX, LADY.

OLD STRAIGHTS LIKE **BEN URICH** COULD **STAND** TO HAVE A DRINK SPILLED ON THEM!

VERY FUNNY, **SERGEANT TORK**, BUT NOT TRUE! I'M A VERY HIP GUY!

I'LL BET. **BRIDGE** EVERY THURSDAY.

STILL MAKING **FRIENDS**, HUH, TORK?

*MATT MURDOCK IS **BLIND**. YET, HIS PARANORMALLY-HEIGHTENED NATURAL SENSES DETECT A MACHINE-GUN BOLT LOCKING INTO PLACE!*

SAM! **DOWN!**

BRRUP!

THE WAITRESS PRODUCES A .45 AUTOMATIC. TORK YANKS BEN URICH OUT OF ITS LINE OF FIRE MERE SECONDS BEFORE THE WEAPON EXPLODES!

BLAM

KRASH!

SAM-- OUTSIDE!

M-MURDOCK--?!

ARRGHH!

BOK

HI, THERE. MY NAME'S SAM WILSON.

FOLKS CALL ME THE FALCON, WHEN I'M WEARING MY LONG UNDERWEAR--

SOK!

POW!

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE SHOOTING AT MY FRIEND AND ME, BUT I'M SURE YOU'LL EXPLAIN ALL--

-- SOON AS YOU WAKE UP!

WHAP!

ANY IDEAS, SERGEANT?

YOU'RE A REPORTER, URICH! FIGURE IT OUT!

"GOTTA REACH MY RIFLE BEFORE THAT BIMBO FIGURES OUT MY MOVE! LUCKILY, EVERYBODY'S SCATTERING--DISTRACTING HER--"

OH, CRIPES.

GOOD-BYE, COP!

CLIK CLIK

JAMMED!

GOT TO RE-LOAD, BEFORE...

NO GOOD, TOOTS!

SOON...

MATTHEW, I'LL GIVE YOU THREE GUESSES AS TO WHO SENT THESE TWO...

THE *REPORT* IS IN FROM CANAL STREET.

URICH AND MURDOCK ARE STILL ALIVE.

OUR TWO AGENTS HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

TERMINATE THEM BOTH, TODAY. *BEFORE* THE ARRAIGN-MENT...

...USE OUT OF TOWN PEOPLE.

THREE P.M.

NED! NED LEEDS!

HI, LANCE.

NICE TO ACTUALLY *FIND* YOU FOR ONCE. YOU'RE A REGULAR MYSTERY MAN NOWA-DAYS.

I'M GOING TO HIT JONAH UP FOR A EUROPEAN TRIP. I'M WORKING ON A VERY *BIG* STORY... THE BIGGEST OF MY CAREER.

I'LL NEED A PHOTOGRAPHER--

--I'M GOING TO RECOMMEND... WHAT'S THIS?

WHY ALL THE SHOTS OF THE *HOBGOB-LIN?*

WELL, I, UH, I'M PUT-TING TOGETHER A PHOTO MORGUE AND I JUST FOUND MY HOBGOBLIN FILE... I'M SORTING THROUGH IT...

SOON, AFTER NED HAS LEFT...

≥WHEW!≤

HE *BOUGHT* IT! I'VE GOT TO BE MORE *CAREFUL!* IF ANYONE EVER *SUSPECTED...*

...EH? NED LEFT HIS NOTE PAD HERE!

HE SAID HE'S HEADING OVER TO HIS OLD APARTMENT TO PICK UP SOME NOTES!

WELL, I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT HIM COMING BACK *HERE!* I'LL CATCH NED AT HIS EX-WIFE'S PLACE!

THIS IS A LIST OF MEN I WANT ELIMINATED FROM MY ORGANIZATION.

DO NOT WRITE THIS DOWN.

HOLLINGSWORTH...

...DARBY...

...BENTON...

...WIGGINS...

...LEVY...

...NOSTRAND...

MEANWHILE...

FLASH THOMPSON, YOU'D BETTER LET ME GO! WITHOUT GROCERIES, WE'LL STARVE!

DON'T BE GONE TOO LONG, BETTY--

-- I STOP BREATHING WHEN YOU'RE NOT AROUND. YOU'VE GIVEN ME SHELTER AND SUPPORT SINCE JACK O'LANTERN BROKE ME OUT OF JAIL...*

YOU'VE STOOD BESIDE ME, WHILE EVERY-ONE ELSE THINKS I'M THE HOBGOBLIN!**

*SEE ISSUE #280. **FLASH WAS ACCUSED OF BEING THE HOBGOBLIN IN ISH #276. -- JIM.

I'LL KEEP MY SMILE ON 'TIL YOU GET BACK!

FLASH HAS TURNED AROUND COMPLETELY! WHEN HE CAME TO ME HE WAS FRIGHTENED AND DISORIENTED!

I DON'T KNOW IF HIDING HIM AT MY APARTMENT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO, BUT FLASH CAN'T POSSIBLY BEGIN TO HELP HIMSELF UNTIL HE HAS A CHANCE TO PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER!

NED'S PLACE IS RIGHT ACROSS THE WAY--

HEY, THERE'S BETTY, NED'S ESTRANGED WIFE! AND... THERE, IN THE WINDOW... FLASH THOMPSON!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WHAT AN INCREDIBLE STROKE OF LUCK!

AT LAST, I HAVE MY CHANCE!

...JENKINS...

...WILLIAMS...

...STONE...

...MATOS...

...NEVEL...

...THORTON...

...VANDROSS...

A HALF-HOUR LATER...

FLASH! FLASH, YOU LUG... HELP ME WITH THESE BAGS--

WAKE UP, CRETIN!

WHAT ON EARTH...?

OPEN YOUR EYES--!

--I WANT YOU TO KNOW WHO HAS DESTROYED YOU!

FOR THE MANY CRIMES YOU'VE PERPETRATED AGAINST ME-- I WANT YOU AWAKE THAT YOU MAY SEE THE TRUE FACE OF YOUR DESTROYER!

F-FLASH--!

EH?

YOU?!

AAIIEE!!

SHE'S COLLAPSED FROM THE SHOCK! UNFORTUNATE! I DID NOT INTEND TO INVOLVE HER IN THIS!

HER SCREAM WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BRING THE NEIGHBORS RUNNING!

THUS, THOMPSON GAINS A TEMPORARY REPRIEVE!

WHILE I MUST CONCENTRATE MY EFFORTS ON AVENGING MYSELF AGAINST JACK O'LANTERN!

A MIDTOWN SKYSCRAPER--

SOON, VANESSA, THIS WILL BE OVER.

YOU WILL ONCE AGAIN BE FREE...

NOON. FOREST HILLS.

HAH! BAD MOVE, SON!

MILK AND COOKIES, BOYS!

DON'T DISTRACT HIM, MAY. YOUNG PETER, HERE, IS ABOUT TO GET WIPED OUT!

BELIEVE IT!

MR. CHEKOV'S *SLAUGHTERING* ME AT CHESS BECAUSE MY MIND'S REALLY NOT ON THE GAME! THAT *SCENE* AT MY APARTMENT THIS MORNING WAS JUST *TOO MUCH!* THE BLACK CAT BULLDOZED HER WAY INTO MY PLACE AFTER *HER* APARTMENT WAS FIREBOMBED.* AND, EVEN THOUGH MARY JANE AND I DON'T HAVE ANY FORMAL COMMITMENT...

*PPTSSM #123 -- JIM.

...I FELT REALLY SKEEVY WHEN SHE WALKED IN AND FOUND FELICIA THERE! I HAVE NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR...OR *DO* I?

TELEPHONE, PETER! IT'S THAT NICE *MATT MURDOCK!*

I'VE TOLD YOU NOT TO CALL ME HERE!

GOOD-BYE!

MURDOCK AND YOU HAVE A FALLING OUT, PETER?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

SLAM!

LATER, AT JACK O'LANTERN'S TEMPORARY BASE OF OPERATIONS...

KINGPIN CALLED ME *INADEQUATE!* ME *JACK O'LANTERN!* I'VE BEEN HIRED BY LEADERS ALL OVER THIS *PLANET* TO DO *TOUGH JOBS* THEIR OWN PEOPLE COULDN'T HANDLE!

AND, NOW I'M DUMPED FROM A CUSHY, TWO-BIT GIG LIKE-- WHAT?!

CRASH!

HOBGOBLIN! *HERE?!*

YES, JACK O'-LANTERN...

...HERE TO MAKE YOU *PAY* FOR *DE-SERTING* ME THE OTHER NIGHT!

YOU *LUNATIC!* YOU SAW SPIDER-MAN, AND WAN-TED TO *ATTACK* HIM! *

*ISSUE #286 -- JIM.

SUDDENLY...

K-POW!

ALFREDO?!

THOUGH SHIELDED BY HIS COSTUME'S CHAIN MAIL, THE IMPACT OF ALFREDO'S GUNSHOT KNOCKS THE HOBGOBLIN TO THE FLOOR!

UH-UHNN, HOBGOBLIN-- NO *TRICKS* THIS TIME! YOU MADE A *BIG MISTAKE* WHEN YOU CROSSED ME!

KA-BOOM!

THIS *JAMMING DEVICE* INHIBITS YOUR COSTUME'S CYBERNETIC WEAPONRY, AND DISABLES THAT GLIDER OF YOURS!

IN OTHER WORDS, JERK, YOU'VE *HAD IT!*

NO!

I MUST BE THE ONE WHO TAKES THE GOBLIN OUT!

WHAT AN *IDIOT!* I DROPPED MY INHIBITOR-- HOBBY WILL BE BACK TO FULL POWER--

"--ANY SECOND NOW!"

FOOL! YOU CANNOT DESTROY THE HOBGOBLIN!

COME *BACK* YOU COWARD!

RETURN I *SHALL*, JACK-O'LANTERN! WAIT AND *WONDER!*

A PROTRACTED BATTLE WILL BE A WASTE OF MY ENERGIES! I'M ON THE VERGE OF THE BIGGEST COUP IN THE UNDERWORLD'S HISTORY!

NOTHING MUST JEOPARDIZE THOSE PLANS! JACK O'LANTERN AND ALFREDO WILL HAVE TO *WAIT!*

ALFREDO JUST CALLED. HE ALMOST HAD HOBGOBLIN, BUT JACK O'LANTERN RUINED IT!

NOW HOBGOBLIN WILL THINK THE *ROSE* WAS BEHIND ALFREDO'S ATTACK... AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RETALIATE!

THIS MESS JUST KEEPS GROWING!

LOOK, DINA, HOBGOBLIN DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT THIS *LOFT*...

I'VE KEPT IT A SECRET, PREFERRING TO OPERATE FROM MY MIDTOWN PENTHOUSE!

STILL, MAYBE WE SHOULD SPLIT--

BBRRRRRRRR

THAT'S THE *ROSE'S* DIRECT LINE... ONLY *VARLEY* CALLS ME ON THAT PHONE!

YES, MR. VARLEY?

RICHARD, THIS IS YOUR *FATHER*. YOU MUST COME IMMEDIATELY.

HELL'S KITCHEN, LATE AFTERNOON...

ANY O' YOU GUYS BRING A DECK OF CARDS?

DOESN'T LOOK GOOD, DOES IT?

WELL, MATT, ARE YOU SURPRISED?

YOU'VE MESSED WITH SPIDER-MAN'S HEAD ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM DISLIKE YOU A WHOLE LOT.

YOUR ATTITUDE REALLY STINKS! YOU TREATED SPIDEY LIKE A *KID*! LIKE *YOU* WERE THE "SERIOUS ADULT" AND HE WAS SOME KIND OF JERK.

NOW YOU EXPECT HIM TO COME JUST BECAUSE YOU *CALLED*!

IT'S OKAY, *FALCON*-- I CAN SPEAK FOR MYSELF!

SPIDER-MAN... AND THE *BLACK CAT*!

SPIDER-MAN... WAIT...

NO, *YOU* WAIT, MISTER! YOU'VE GOT A HECUVA LOT OF NERVE CALLING ME--

NO GAMES THIS TIME SPIDER-MAN! NO TRICKS! IT'S THE *KINGPIN*!

HE'S GONNA *KILL* EVERY ONE OF HIS LIEUTENANTS TONIGHT! IT'S HIS BIG HOUSE-CLEANING MOVE! YOU WANT TO NAIL THIS GUY, DON'T YOU? WELL... HERE'S YOUR *CHANCE*!

STILL LATER...

TONIGHT? YOU SURE, ROSCOE?

YEAH, YEAH. THANKS!

KINGPIN'S CALLED A MEETING OF ALL THE BOSSES ON HIS PAYROLL! SOMETHIN' BIG IS GOIN' DOWN!

TOO BAD I COULDN'T RUB TUBBO OUT BEFORE HE MANAGED TO CRAWL HIS WAY BACK INTO TOWN...

...AND INTO THE COMMAND OF HIS CRIMINAL EMPIRE!

WELL, THAT'S JUST GREAT! I *COULD* TRY'N *HIT* KINGPIN TONIGHT, BUT I'D ONLY HAVE A COUPLE HOURS TO PLAN!

QUICKIE, SLIP-SHOD PLANNING IS NO GOOD FOR A *PRO* LIKE KINGPIN! NO, BEST TO JUST RIDE THIS OUT.

FADE OUT... PLAN... BIDE MY TIME. SOON, SOONER THAN FATSO EXPECTS...

...*HAMMERHEAD* WILL MAKE HIS *MOVE!*

STILL LATER, IN AN ALLEY NEAR THE KINGPIN'S SKYSCRAPER...

MY SOURCES TELL ME THE *POLICE* ARE AWARE OF KINGPIN'S MEETING TONIGHT! THAT UNDOUBTEDLY MEANS HE'S CUT A *DEAL* WITH THEM...

...THE *FEE* FOR HIS RE-ADMISSION TO THE CITY! I THINK THE ONLY THING I HATE MORE THAN *CRIMINALS* ARE PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY...

...MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE THE *POWER* TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND INSTEAD CUT *DEALS* AND *COMPROMISE* THEIR ETHICS IN THE NAME OF THE "GREATER GOOD."

WELL, I'LL BE *WATCHING* TONIGHT. WATCHING VERY *CLOSELY*...

ELEVEN FORTY-FIVE.

IN FIFTEEN MINUTES, VANESSA, A *NEW YEAR* WILL DAWN FOR THIS CITY. AND, A NEW LIFE FOR YOU SHALL BEGIN AS WELL.

IS THAT *TRUE*, FATHER...?

WILL THE NEW YEAR *BRING* A NEW BEGINNING... OR PERPETUATE THE STATUS QUO?

TO THE NARROW-MINDED, EVEN THE MOST SWEEPING CHANGE ESCAPES NOTICE, RICHARD.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN?

THAT YOU, THE "ROSE," ARE ACTUALLY *RICHARD FISK*... MY *SON*? WHAT *DIFFERENCE* DOES IT MAKE?

I CALLED SO THAT YOU MAY SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR MOTHER... FOREVER.

I *KNOW* WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO HER, FATHER. I *KNOW* YOU'RE *KEEPING* HER LIKE THAT!

AND NOW YOU'VE LOWERED YOURSELF TO THREATENING PEOPLE WITH GUNS? TO *SHOOTING* POLICE OFFICERS?

DON'T RUN THAT "HOLIER-THAN-THOU" BIT ON *ME*, FATHER! YOU'VE DONE FAR WORSE!

AND, TONIGHT, MY PLAN IS TO DO SOME *GOOD* FOR THIS CITY... AND FOR YOUR MOTHER!

VANESSA HAD *LEFT* ME RECENTLY. *

*SEE THE DAREDEVIL GRAPHIC NOVEL--JIM.

SHE'D BEGUN A NEW LIFE SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE. I, OF COURSE, KEPT HER UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

OF COURSE.

I BECAME AWARE OF A PLAN TO KILL YOUR MOTHER.

IN RETALIATION FOR SOME BUSINESS OF *YOURS*, NO DOUBT.

IRRELEVANT. I HAD YOUR MOTHER RETURNED TO NEW YORK IMMEDIATELY WHILE I *PERSONALLY* ATTENDED TO HER WOULD-BE ATTACKERS!

I KEPT HER IN THIS STATE TO PREVENT HER FROM BEING *SHOCKED* BY HER SUDDEN RETURN. YOUR MOTHER IS STILL RECOVERING, AND AS SUCH IS IN A FRAGILE STATE OF MIND!

TONIGHT VANESSA WILL *REGAIN* HER FREEDOM. AN AMBULANCE WAITS TO TRANSPORT HER TO THE AIRPORT.

SO, THIS *AFFAIR* YOU'RE HOSTING--?

SERVES A TWOFOLD PURPOSE. TO *DISTRACT* MY WAYWARD LIEUTENANTS WHILE VANESSA IS SAFELY TRANSPORTED...

...AND TO DELIVER TO THE *AUTHORITIES* OF THIS CITY A *TOKEN GESTURE* IN RETURN FOR THEIR COOPERATION IN AIDING MY RETURN. THE GANG WAR *ENDS* AT THE STROKE OF *MIDNIGHT!*

TEN BEFORE MIDNIGHT.

THIS IS THE BLIND SIDE OF THE KINGPIN'S SKYSCRAPER.

THIS IS THE LOBBY.

GOOD EVENING, MR. HOLLINGSWORTH, MR. DARBY, MR. BENTON...

"...MR. SOLQUIST, MR. LEVY, MR. NOSTRAND...

"...MR. JENKINS, MR. WILLIAMS, MR. STONE...

THWIPP!

"...MR. MATOS... MR. NEVEL, MR. THORNTON, MR. VANDROSS...

MIDNIGHT.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, GENTLE-MEN.

YOU'RE ALL FIRED.

KILL THEM ALL.

EXIT

THWIPP!

WHA--?

SPIDER-MAN! WITH THREE OTHER COSTUMED FREAKS!!

SOON, ON THE STREET BELOW...

VANESSA WILL BE TAKEN DIRECTLY TO THE AIRPORT... AND FROM THERE TO SAFETY IN EUROPE.

I WILL LONG FOR HER EVERY RE-MAINING DAY OF MY LIFE.

LANCE

DAREDEVIL! DAREDEVIL! I THINK I'VE FIGURED THIS ONE OUT!

I'VE GOT A THEORY!

BOK!

WAP!

HANG ON, SPIDER-MAN...

...I'M A LITTLE BUSY OVER HERE!

MATT-- THE AMBULANCE JUST CRUISED BY. NOBODY FOLLOWING.

VANESSA'S SAFELY AWAY.

GOOD, TORK! SEND IN THE TROOPS!

I COPY. THE STORM-TROOPERS ARE ON THEIR WAY!

THE SOONER, THE BETTER, TORK. THIS ROOM'S A COMPLETE LOSS!

EVEN AS DAREDEVIL SPEAKS, RIOT POLICE STORM THE LOBBY!

MOVE IT, YOU GUYS! THOSE PEOPLE NEED *HELP* UP THERE!

MY *THEORY*, DD-- KINGPIN CUT SOME KINDA DEAL. HE COMES BACK, THE FEDS GET HIS TOP LIEUTENANTS!

KINGY SETS UP THIS PARTY, MAKES LIKE HE'S GONNA *SHOOT* EVERYBODY-- BUT ALL HIS PEOPLE HAVE *BLANKS* IN THEIR GUNS!

THEN *WE* ARRIVE AND "SAVE" THE LIEUTENANTS!

AHA! RIGHT ON SCHEDULE, THE LOCAL GENDARMES!

GOTTA TELL YOU, DD-- YOU REALLY STINK. *USING* ME... AGAIN AND AGAIN!

HOW *DO* YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT?!

THE GANG WAR ENDS, KINGY'S GOT TO REBUILD HIS EMPIRE... SO, AT LEAST, FOR A WHILE, THE GOOD GUYS WIN!

THE COPS *BUST* 'EM, AND SINCE WE "SAVED" THEM FROM KINGPIN, THESE DOPES ROLL OVER AND TURN STATE'S EVIDENCE!

DOWN THE HALL...

VANESSA IS SAFELY EN ROUTE TO THE AIRPORT.

MY SUBORDINATES ARE NOW BEING ARRESTED.

IT IS FINISHED.

SLAMM!

ALMOST.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, SPIDER-MAN!

DOWN THE HALL THERE ARE A NUMBER OF LOW-LIFE, GUN-TOTING THUGS FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT.

PLEASE... *INDULGE* YOURSELF.

YOU'VE GOT IT ALL FIGURED OUT, DON'T YOU, KINGPIN? YOU'VE COVERED ALL THE ANGLES! EVERYBODY GETS WHAT THEY WANT...

...I JUST GET *USED!*

SPIDER-MAN, I'VE MADE SEVERAL *FORTUNES* VIA THE PRACTICE OF *USING* PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

IDEALISTS. OPTIMISTS. TRUSTING IDIOTS WHO BELIEVE THERE IS HAPPINESS TO BE HAD ON THIS PLANET. FOOLS WHO BELIEVE IN *JUSTICE*. I TRADE ON THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

AND NOBODY HAS THE *GUTS* TO STAND UP TO TO YOU!

NOBODY HAS WHAT IT TAKES TO PULL THE PLUG ON YOU!

MY DEATH WOULD SERVE NO PURPOSE...

...OTHER THAN TO BLOODY THE HANDS OF SUCH GOD-FEARING MEN AS YOURSELF.

YOU FACE AN UNDEFEATABLE FOE, SPIDER-MAN. ACCEPT IT, AS *OTHERS* HAVE.

GET UP... GET UP FROM BEHIND THAT DESK SO I CAN SHOVE YOUR WORDS DOWN YOUR FAT THROAT!

I THINK NOT.

SPIDER-MAN... BACK OFF!

DON'T WORRY, DAREDEVIL... I'M NOT GOING TO KILL HIM!

G'HEAD, I'LL CLOSE MY EYES.

TAKE HIM! YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I HATE HIM!

DAREDEVIL--

SPIDER-MAN, THIS WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING. WE WON TONIGHT, DON'T, YOU SEE!?

NO!!

I DON'T SEE AT ALL!!

KRASSH!

ONE DAY, MISTER!

ME AND YOU!

ONE DAY YOU'RE GONNA PUSH ME TOO FAR!

AND, ON THAT DAY, HEAVEN HELP US BOTH!

MY CRYSTAL IMAGE OF VANESSA... SHATTERED AND RUINED. HOW RIDICULOUSLY SYMBOLIC.

PROUD OF YOURSELF?

I SHOULD ASK YOU THAT.

I'M MORE ASHAMED OF MYSELF RIGHT NOW THAN I'VE EVER BEEN. I DID WHAT WAS RIGHT... WHAT ***HAD*** TO BE DONE...

...BUT THE ***PRICE*** IS A HIGH ONE.

THE ROAD TO NOBILITY IS LINED WITH SUCH PITFALLS, MURDOCK. THE BOND OF ***HATRED*** WE SHARE HAS BEEN, THIS NIGHT, MITIGATED BY OUR PURSUIT OF OUR PERSONAL GOALS.

YOU HAVE MADE A ***SUBSTANTIAL*** INROAD INTO MY CRIMINAL EMPIRE. ***I*** HAVE SECURED MY WIFE'S FREEDOM AND GUARANTEED HER SAFETY.

AND, SPIDER-MAN?

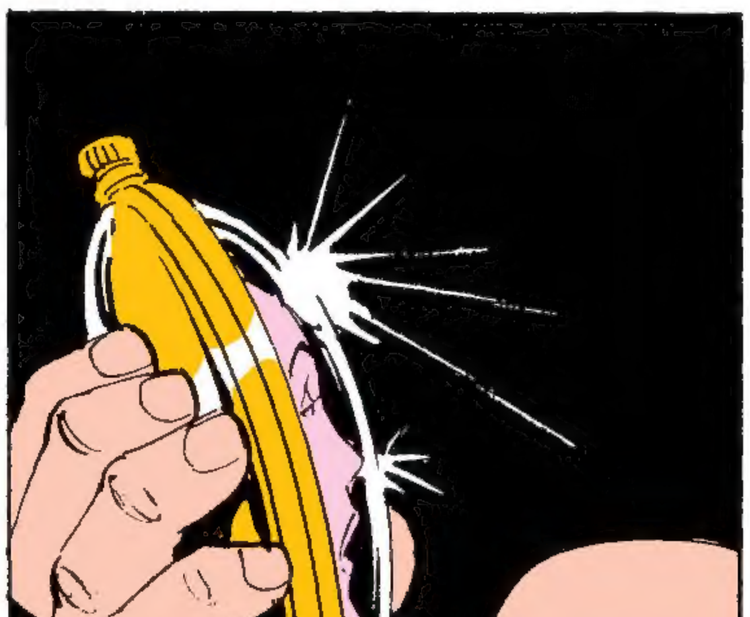
HE IS A MERE BOY. A NAIVE, WIDE-EYED CHILD. HE WILL LEARN.

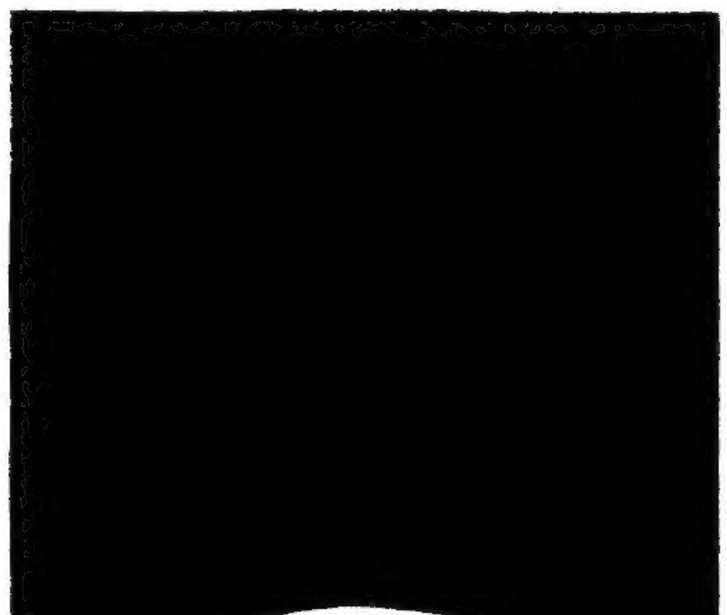
YES, SOME DAY, HE'LL BE JUST ***LIKE*** US, WON'T HE?

AND, I'LL HAVE ONLY ***MYSELF*** TO BLAME FOR THAT!

SORRY ABOUT YOUR ***CRYSTAL***, KINGPIN. BUT, IF YOU TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE RUINED GLASS, MAYBE YOU'LL SEE A REFLECTION OF YOUR OWN LIFE... WHAT AN AWFUL ***WASTE*** IT'S BECOME!

MAYBE THE BROKEN GLASS WILL TEACH YOU A LESSON.





NEXT: NO *TRICKS!* NO *GIMMICKS!* *THIS TIME* WE *MEAN IT!*

THE HOBGOBLIN REVEALED!

Shadowcat